

Milton. July 24. 48.

My dear Dav.

The world and all has kept me of late from writing: the lack of any ship, the press of duties, some desparate trouble and what not have made me half forget you. A ship pails known, or longer, in a day or two, and in the midst of my preparations for a journey, on Monday morning, I sit down to do in an hour what I ought to have five atleast to do well. For I would gladly send you a dozen readable sheets, & tell you about every thing "past, present and to come" as the fortune tellers on the Champs Elysees say on the sign boards over their tents, - and moralize idly upon a few lines about you in a certain scrapbook² two days ago, from one Mrs. White, of Trenton for the nonce.

No said letter shrewdly & sceptically argues out your intended marriage, and quotes some speculations of your own respecting mine. You may, for the latter, cease to speculate; as I have done, long while back; I have had enough for once; and if marriage were an anodyne might use it to get me a little sleep & forgetfulness, but am in no mood to tell any woman the insupportable falsehood, that I possess a heart worth accepting. - As to yours, I am wholly in the dark. I have not rec'd. a line from you for six months, - since the end of Jan'y. That is. You are either ashore or on a journey, or "What else was it that hindered Baal from accomodating his friends? And it is in vain to cry aloud & cut myself with knives, for to say nothing of the opposite propriety of first cutting you, & the obvious danger of superinducing an attack of bronchitis by the exertion, & on application (with casts) to Dr Green, my voice artificially prepared in black & white would not be half away towards the land of the Azureanians before your letter would begin to come like berries in July, with every ship. Amen. So live it by, soon. Do write, if of a few lines, by each ships. -

First and foremost, (for I know you are dying not impatience
to hear any story,) — my affairs here are not formally settled. I
wonder if they ever will be. I wish almost that they wholly were
settled, for I would then ship immediately for No. and let you
come home. Much as I hate the sea, however pacific, and
such vagabundian ~~co~~ patroists as your Chileans must be, I
desire you much to give you a furlough, that I would extricate
myself willingly for a year to effect it. But Dr Baird could not
now send me; since the Presbyterian Association have both sent
me to Coventry, he would not dare to employ me. The fact is I am
in a real fix; a bad fix, some call it; "going to destruction" ~~is~~ the
whence others prefer; many desire to "settle with" me, and think
they are doing it. Perhaps they are; "settling" me in one sense, while
our Milton friends are settling me in another. The Xmasm
protracted illness of our good old Deacon has prevented the meeting
which is to enjoy me as a stated Supply for a year. He is now
recovering & says that three days shall pass, from the time
he can get about before, the affair is settled. So as all persons
still seem to be intent upon settlement, I trust quiet will
soon reign. Meantime I am first accused of infidelity, & then
of ^{writing} orthodoxy in the newspapers, & have to swear to ~~convince~~ to
prove that I am not Coleridgean.

But it would be the death of my reputation in all respects
to leave Milton now. I would never recover from it. I must go
ahead and sustain myself whether or no. My preserving steady,
steadfast good nature and taking all Christian interest in good
objects I can not release my position from personal embar-
rassment, but do something for the cause of liberty and truth.
I am glad to find my name treated with respect & regard
often spoken of with true affection.

From some expressions in Mrs. Whitis letter, as quoting yours
& yours yourself affirmed that I hesitated to ~~go~~ so far

to believe you. But you have never distinctly stated your
plans to me, or indeed whether you had formed them; whether
you intended to commit your pulpit here to other hands
altogether, or only meant to remain here a month or a
year & then return; & whether you would come about here
in that case & do nothing, or take for the time a pulpit.

I shall write to Baird to know from him more than you
tell me yourself.

One thing stands greatly in my way, in the ministry, &
would be especially embarrassing, in a mission any pulpit;
I refer to my style of thought & selection of subjects. In fact
I said, I fear that I do not now believe the gospel with
that simplicity and child-like naivete of faith which
is so beautiful, whether it be desirable or not. In endeavor-
ing to evolve great principles, I lose ~~interest~~ interest in facts &
single duties; I preach to enlighten & I dread that coldness
which too often accompanies mere light. Some are trans-
mitting only light; others both heat & light. I may be too Cal-
culating & reflection prone to reform a village of a single
vise, or lift a soul to a higher spiritual atmosphere;
much less could I preach to the heathen. And yet, I am
undoubtedly wrong here; truth is the grand sanctifying element;
among all kinds of people. This however I know certainly,
that my youthful disinterested zeal is gone forever, & a
desire to become comfortable & respectable has an hourly
influence over me which I cannot resist. In my most
disinterested affection, I found such a core of selfishness as
disgusted me. I shall now again be respectable in my own
eyes, whatever name I may bear from abroad.

I spoke of taking a journey. I wrote you last from Phila ~
since which time I have been here, preaching almost without
help, & therefore writing but one sermon a week & often poising
the other. I applied to the Boston Assoc' for license, but they refused,
on the ground that I was loose in my views of scripture; & that from
the refusal was published in a monthly & afterwards in the Review
& Pantan; I answered it in few words, asserting my practical
reception of the Bible, as a rule of faith & practice. I have too
much to do, to get into Controversy. They praise my Christian
Spirit! They may be thankful for my laziness. It needs but a
spark to make a tremendous explosion in New England. But
I am no born Guy Fawkes, & have no wish for Tyburn.
Bushnell preached a grand sermon to the Cambridge Theo.
school graduates last month, on Atonement, 1.50 min. long
amazingly eloquent, thoroughly transcendental or German,
unintelligible to half the audience & unsatisfactory to all
the rest. No but ortho. & unit. mind was present. I
consider him transcendental & heterodox & false, but most
Christianly true. I dined with him & a dozen Unitar-
ian ministers & prof. afterward, at my friend Morrison's.
That sermon is published, (with two or three others) you
shall it. He advised me to a steady, quiet course of in-
dependant thought & action, here.

Last week I went to Salem & Beverly & walked down the
Coast to Cape Ann, & returned recruited. Tomorrow I
start for Bellows Falls, Northampton, Pittsfield, Amherst
& Lancaster & may return end of next week. Most
of my personal friends happen to be in Europe, so
that I feel lonely.

I shall close this now, & trust to another getting to
Boston before the Albatross sails. Ever yours, P.